

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABIDJA 02702 021722Z

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FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2689

C O N F I D E N T I A L ABIDJAN 2702

FOR AF LOUGHRAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: BEXP, IV

SUBJECT: LANG AFRIQUE'S CONFLICT WITH SODESUCRE

REF: A. ABIDJAN 2614, B. STATE 072247

1. IN THE MARCH 28 MEETING WITH MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE SAWADOGO (REFTEL A), IT WAS AGREED THAT LANG AFRIQUE REP MARION WRIGHT AND MINISTER SAWADOGO, ALONG WITH SODESUCRE OFFICIALS AND JOHN FERRITER, WOULD MEET SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 29, TO DISCUSS THE DETAILS OF LANG'S FINANCIAL CLAIMS. THE MEETING TOOK PLACE AS SCHEDULED AND WAS ATTENDED BY THE ABOVE-NAMED, PLUS REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MINISTRIES OF AGRICULTURE, PLAN, AND ECONOMY AND FINANCE. ON SAWADOGO'S INITIATIVE, THE MEETING WAS DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY TO LANG'S PRESENTATION OF ITS CASE AGAINST SODESUCRE. MINISTER SAWADOGO PERMITTED NO INTERRUPTIONS IN WRIGHT'S EXPOSE.

2. MINISTER SAWADOGO OPENED THE MEETING BY STATING THAT LANG HAS NOT SATISFIED THE TERMS OF THE CONTRACT AND THAT DAVID MORSE HAS BEEN ASKED TO "ARBITRATE"; THE MEETING, THEREFORE, WOULD BE DEVOTED TO LANG'S EXPLANATION OF ITS FINANCIAL PROBLEMS WITH A VIEW OF PUTTING TOGETHER A DOSSIER FOR SUBMISSION TO MORSE. AFTER SAWADOGO'S OPENING REMARKS, JOHN FERRITER STATED THAT HE ATTENDING THE MEETING SOLELY AS AN OBSERVER AT THE INVITATION OF MINISTER SAWADOGO AND WRIGHT.

3. UPON CONCLUSION OF WRIGHT'S LENGTHY AND DETAILED PRESENTATION,
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PAGE 02 ABIDJA 02702 021722Z

TION, SODESUCRE PRESIDENT KACOU THANKED WRIGHT FOR HAVING

REOPENED THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM SINCE THIS PERMITTED THE DISCUSSIONS TO TAKE PLACE IN A CLIMATE OF DETENTE. HE NOTED THAT THERE WOULD BE FURTHER MEETINGS SHORTLY TO DISCUSS LANG'S PROBLEMS.

4. MINISTER SAWADOGO WISELY CHOSE TO RESTRICT THE MEETING TO PRESENTATION OF LANG'S SIDE. HAD SODESUCRE REPS BEEN PERMITTED TO RESPOND POINT BY POINT TO WRIGHT'S STATEMENTS, IT IS MOST LIKELY THE MEETING WOULD HAVE DEGENERATED INTO A SHOUTING CONTEST.

5. BOTH MINISTER SAWADOGO AND WRIGHT HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR APPRECIATION FOR FERRITER'S ATTENDANCE AT THE MARCH 28 AND 29 MEETINGS, AS WELL AS FOR RAMSAY'S TRIP TO FERKESSEDOUGOU FOR REOPENING OF THE IRRIGATION SYSTEM. ALTHOUGH DEPARTMENT PLANS TO KEEP ITS DISTANCE FROM DISPUTANTS AT THIS TIME (REFTEL B), I BELIEVE THAT AN EMBASSY REPRESENTATIVE SHOULD CONTINUE TO ATTEND LANG/SODESUCRE MEETINGS AS OBSERVER BECAUSE HIS PRESENCE HAS A SALUTARY EFFECT.
SMITH

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